



Telephone Survey of City of Fresno Voters  
Re: Sales Tax Ballot Measure Feasibility  
Conducted for: The Trust for Public Land



**November, 2016**

# Methodology

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- ▶ Telephone survey of voters in the City of Fresno
- ▶ Voters who were registered, but didn't vote in the last 4 statewide elections (prior to this November) were excluded
- ▶ Conducted by trained, professional interviewers from November 15–20, 2016
- ▶ 503 completed interviews
- ▶ Margin of error:  $\pm 4.4$  percentage points
- ▶ Where applicable, results compared with FM3 Survey of Fresno Voters, March 2015, 600, MoE  $\pm 4.0\%$

*Please note that due to rounding, some percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.*

# Key Findings

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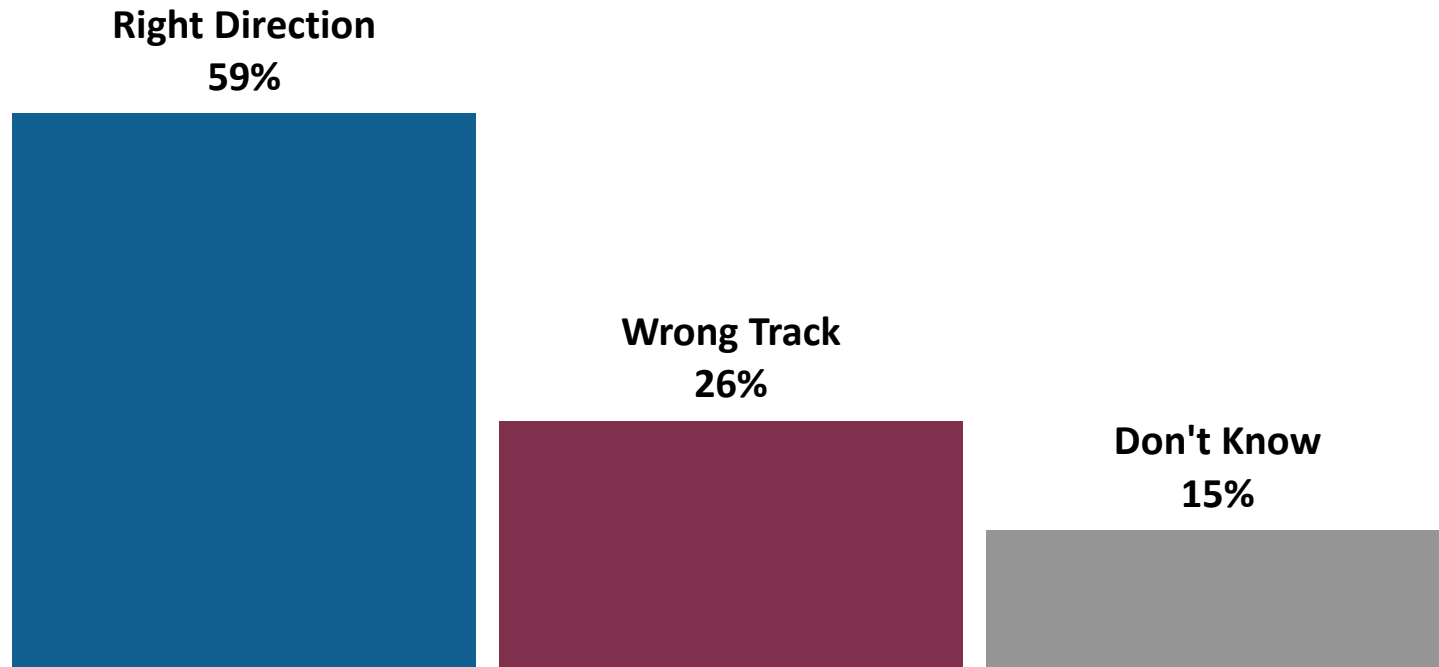
- ▶ A majority of Fresno voters are happy with the direction of the area and rate the quality of life in Fresno positively.
- ▶ Local crime, the economy and public education are top concerns.
- ▶ While maintaining high-quality parks and recreation is a priority to most, many voters indicate that Fresno's parks are run down.
- ▶ Many of voters' top priorities for parks and recreation are centered on maintaining and improving parks and making them safer and cleaner.
- ▶ A local 1/8 cent sales tax for clean, safe parks appears feasible in a future election. Just over two-thirds solidly support such a measure today.
- ▶ High-propensity voters – those who are most likely to vote in a low-turnout election – are less supportive than low-propensity voters.



# Issue Environment

# Direction of Fresno

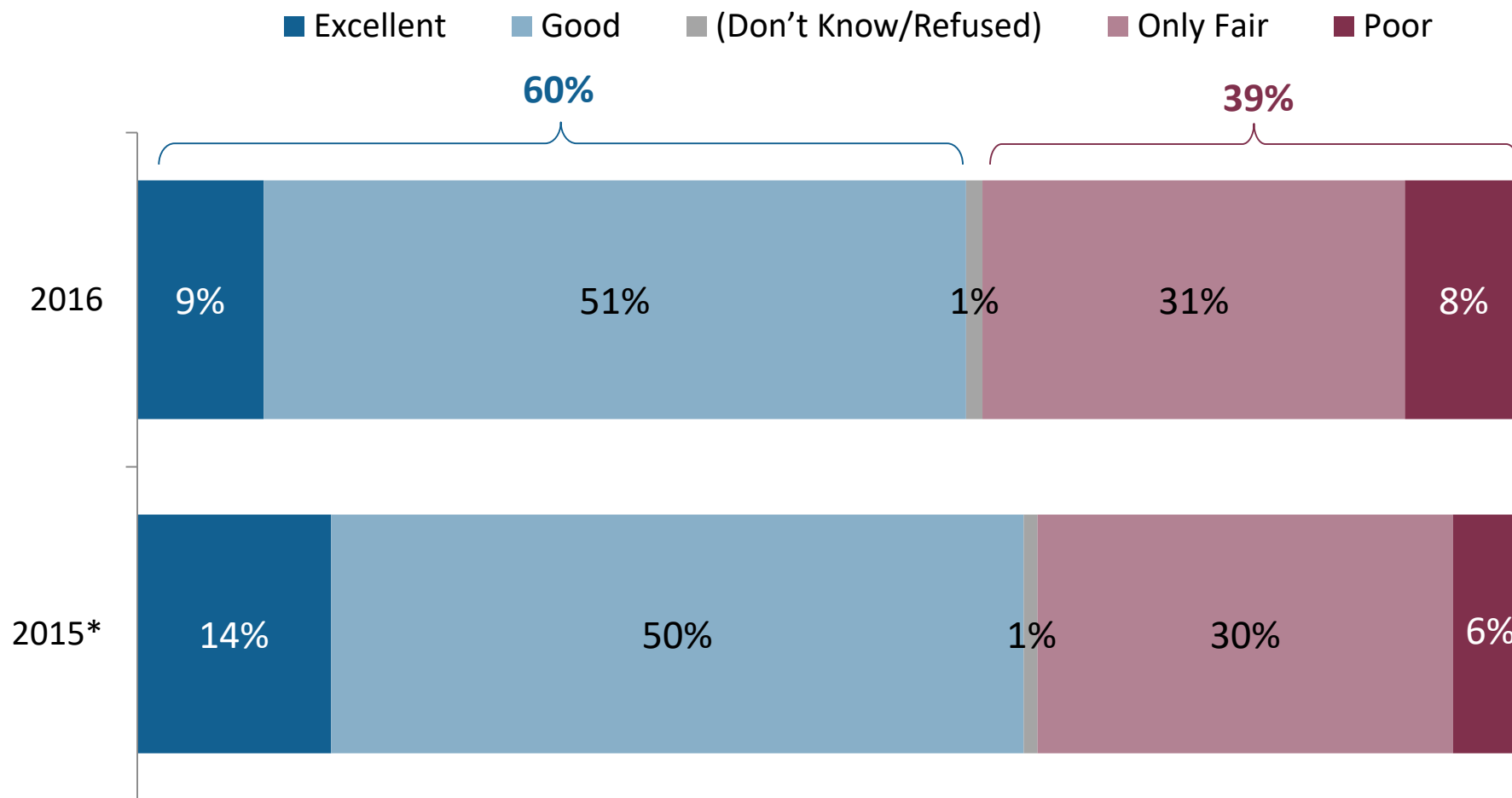
*More than half of voters in Fresno are feeling optimistic.*



*Q4. Do you feel that things in Fresno are going in the right direction or do you feel things are off on the wrong track?*

# Quality of Life Rating

*A majority rate the quality of life in Fresno positively.*



Q5. Generally speaking, how would you rate Fresno as a place to live: is it an excellent place to live, a good place, only fair, or a poor place to live?

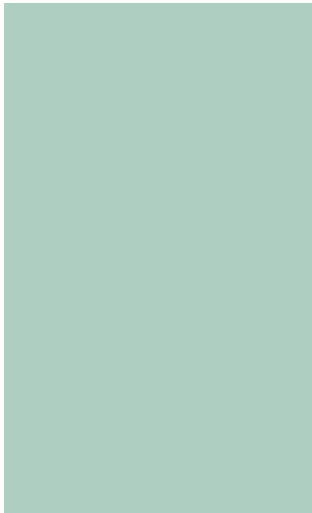
*\*Data from Poll conducted by FM3*

# Park Accessibility

*The percentage of respondents that report living close to a park is similar to citywide estimates on the percentage of residents that actually do.*

Estimated actual percentage of Fresno residents that live within a 10-minute walk to a local, usable public park\*

54%

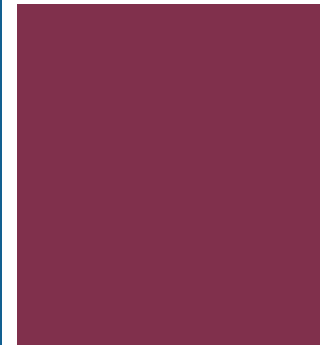


Do you live within a 10-minute walk to a local, usable public park?

Yes  
61%



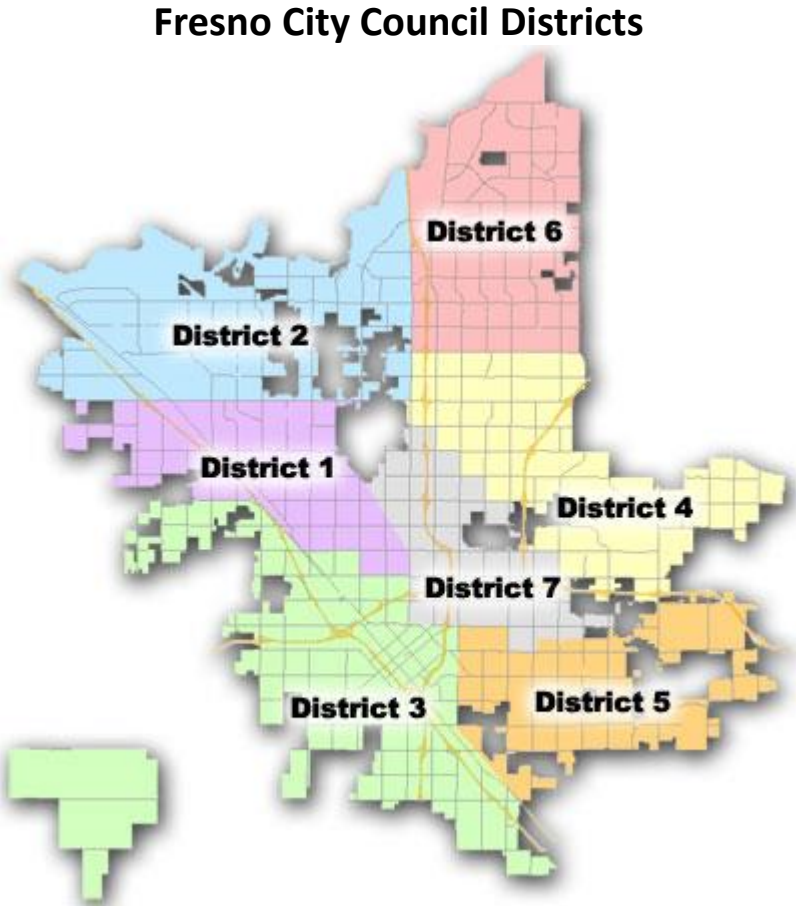
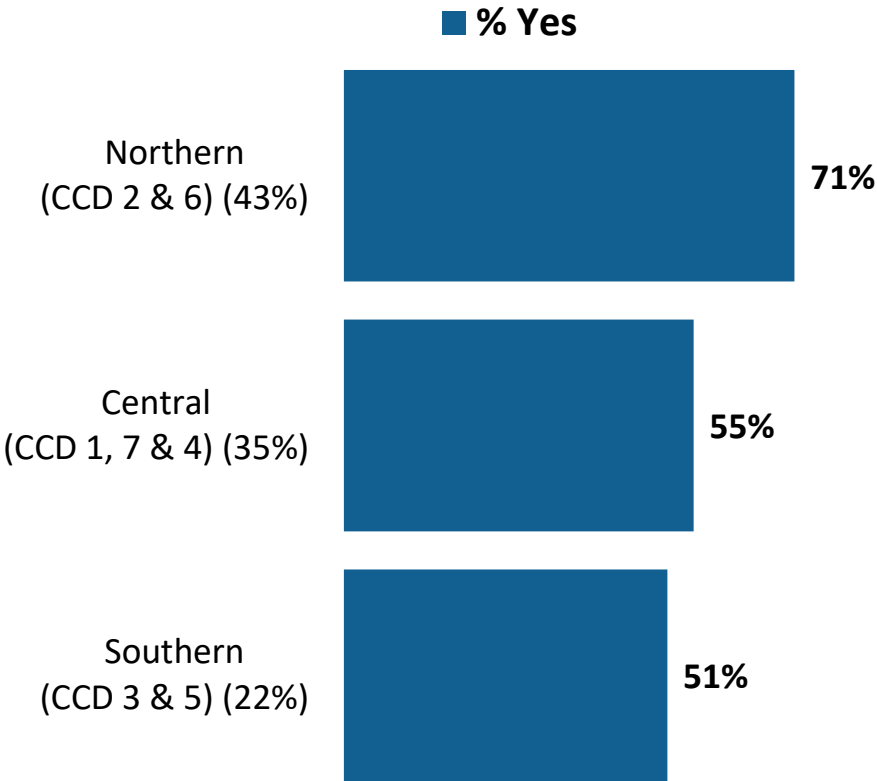
No  
36%



\*Source: <http://parkscore.tpl.org/>

# Park Access, by Geography

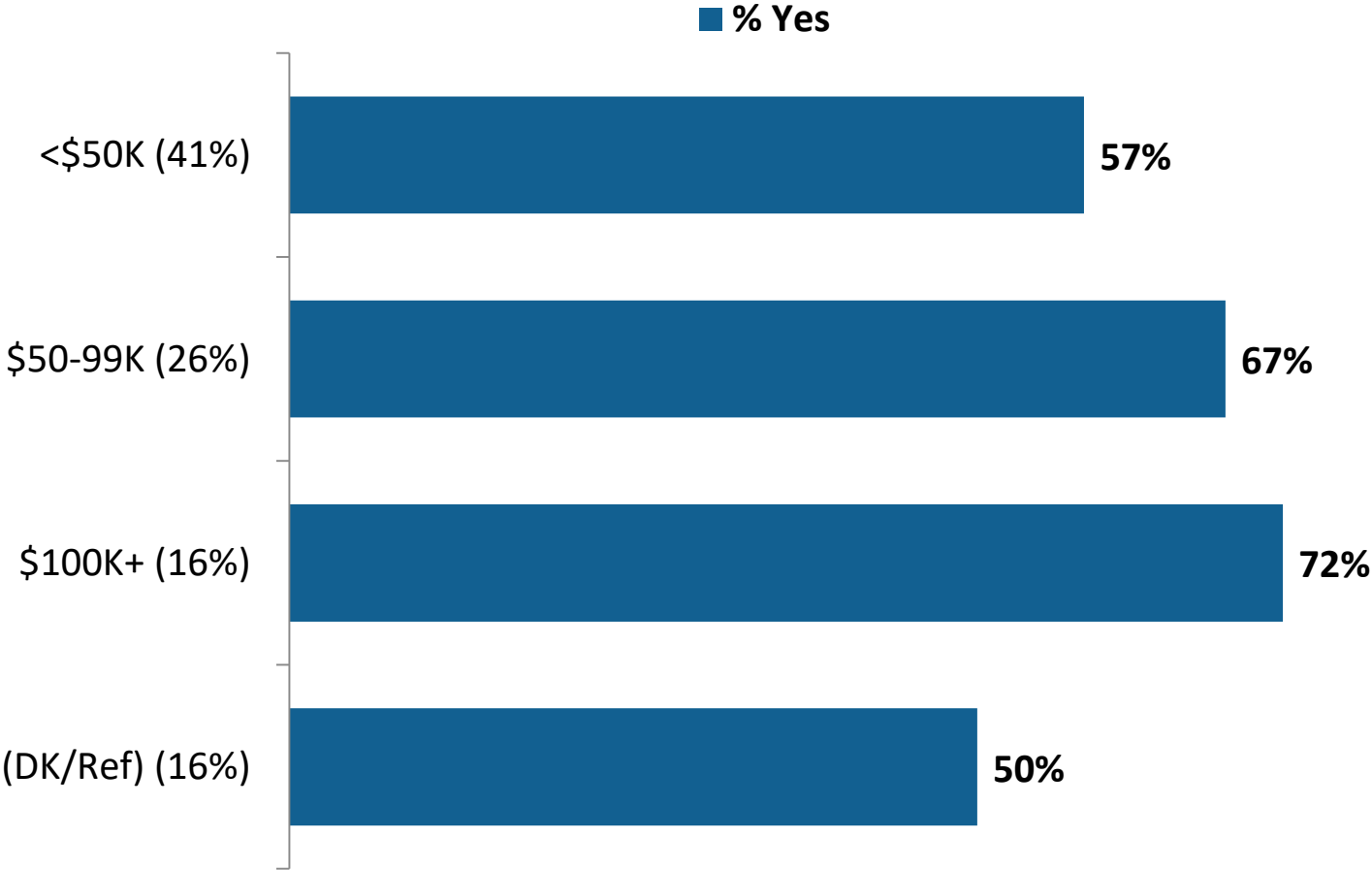
*Voters in the northern part of the city are more likely to report that they have a park nearby.*





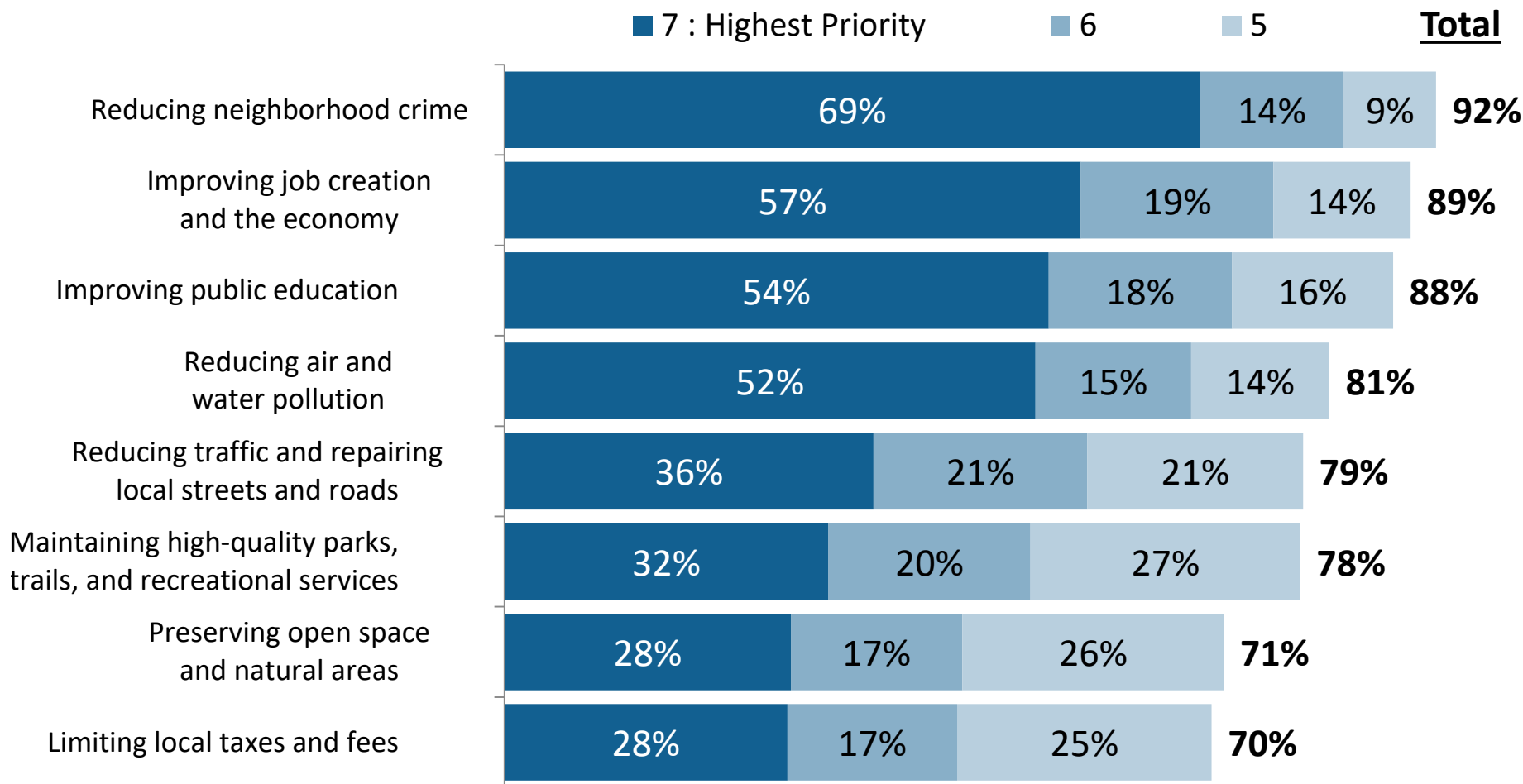
# Park Access, by Income

*Higher household income is associated with better access to parks.*



# Top Priorities

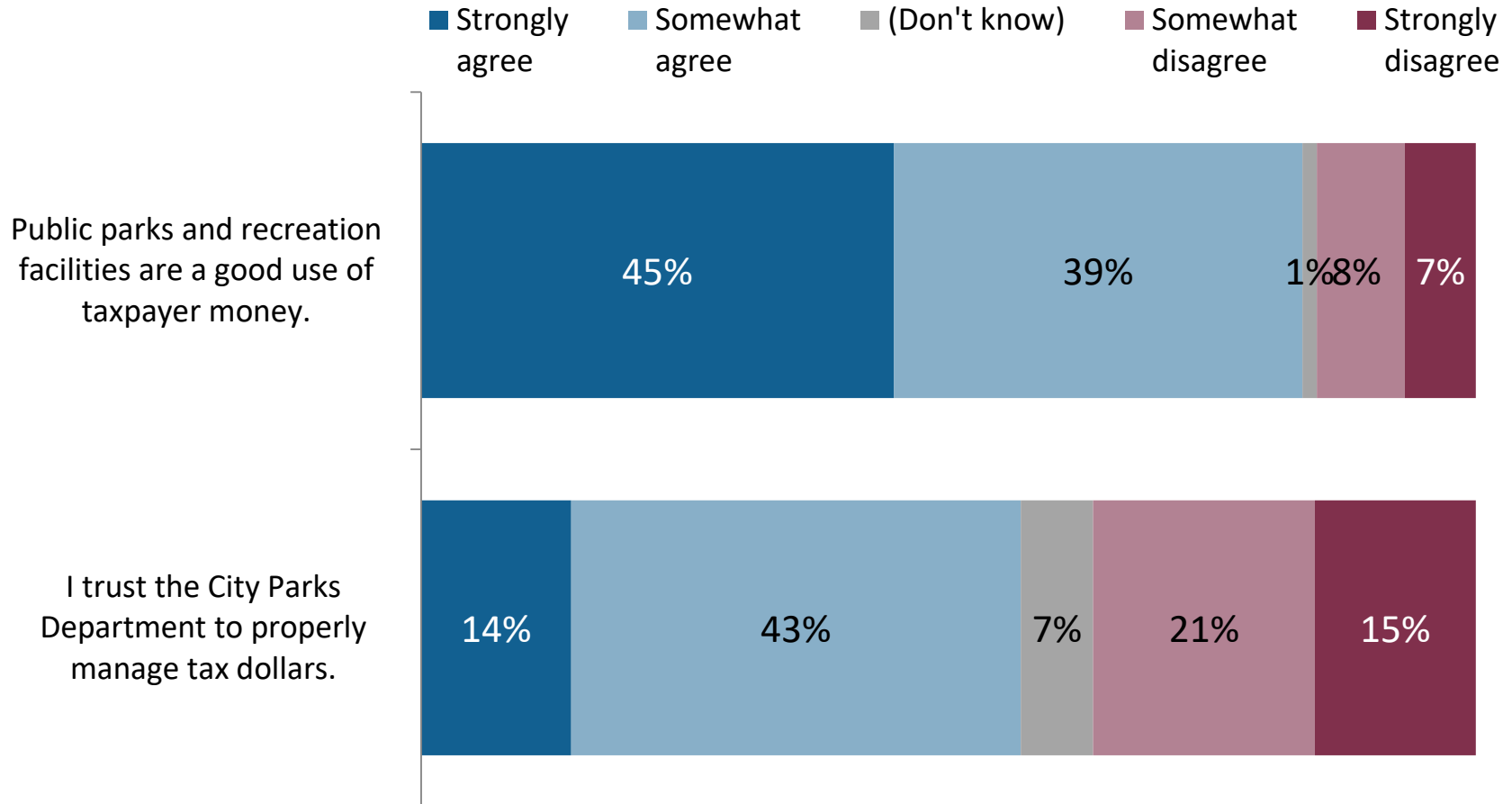
*All priorities tested are important to a majority, but reducing crime, the economy and public education top the list.*



Q6-Q13. For each of the following items, please tell me how high a priority you think that item should be for Fresno. Please use a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means the lowest priority and 7 means the highest priority.

# Tax Dollars for Parks

*An overwhelming majority says parks and recreation are a good use of taxes, while over a majority indicate they trust the Parks department with their tax dollars.*

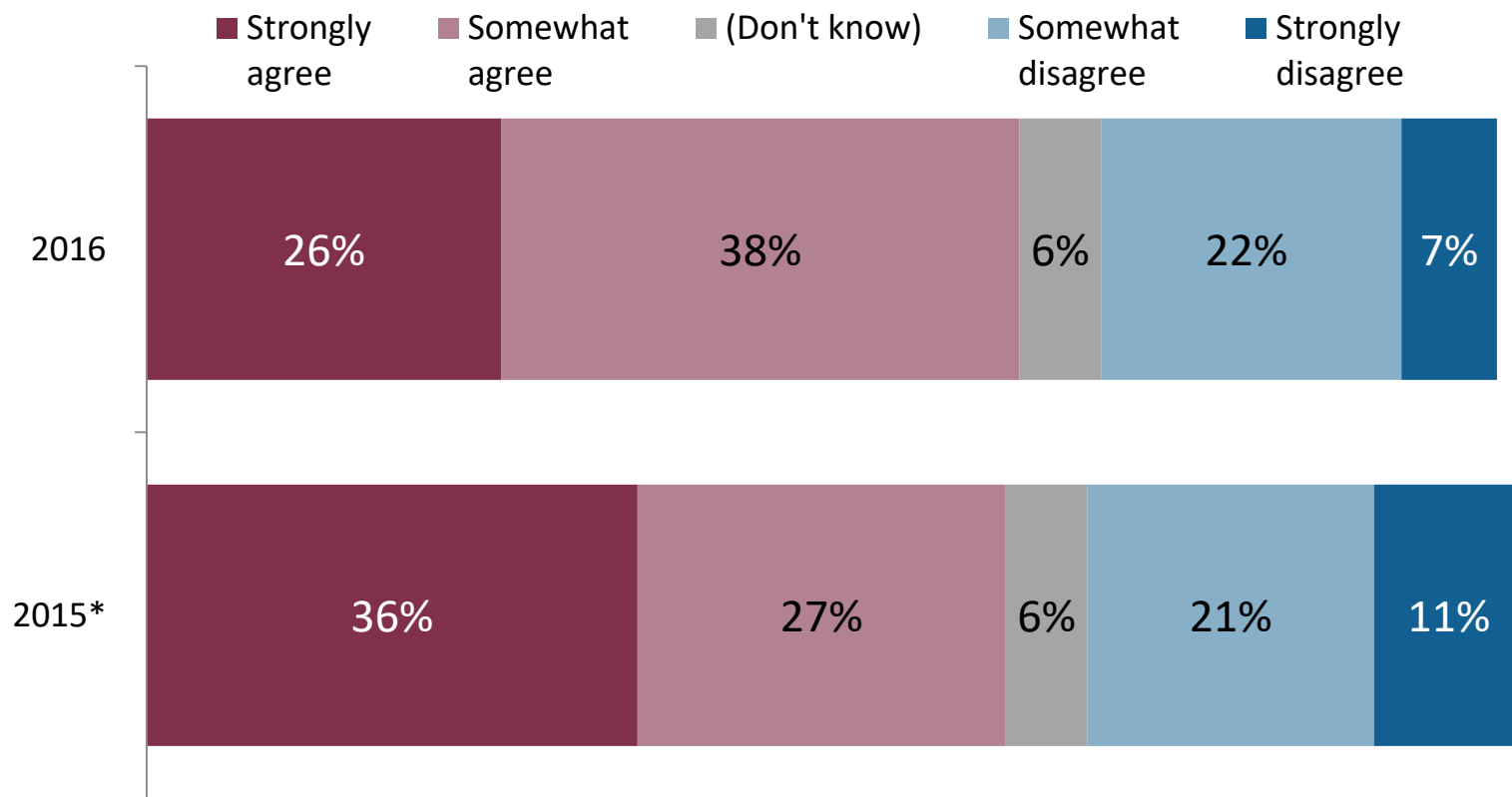


Q16-Q18: Now, please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

# Fresno Parks Attitude

*A majority agree that Fresno parks are in bad shape.*

“Fresno parks are run-down, deteriorating and unsafe.”

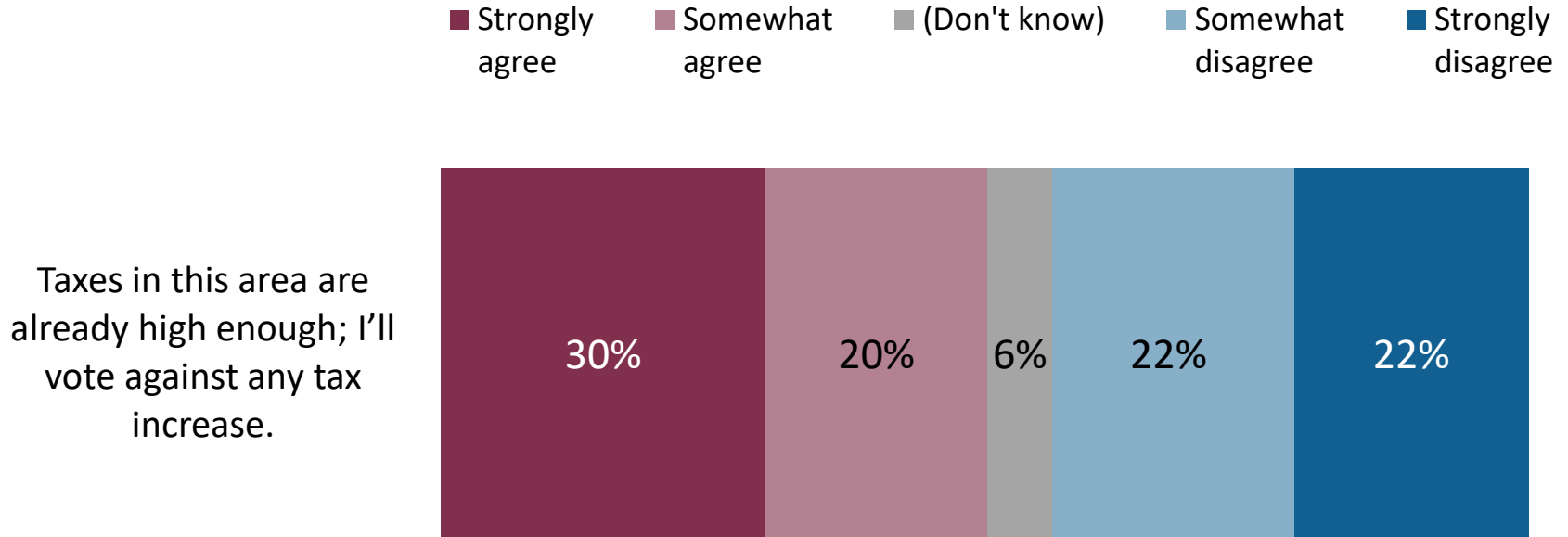


Q15: Now, please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

\*Data from Poll conducted by FM3

# Tax Hesitancy

*Half of voters are hesitant to support new taxes.*



Q16: Now, please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

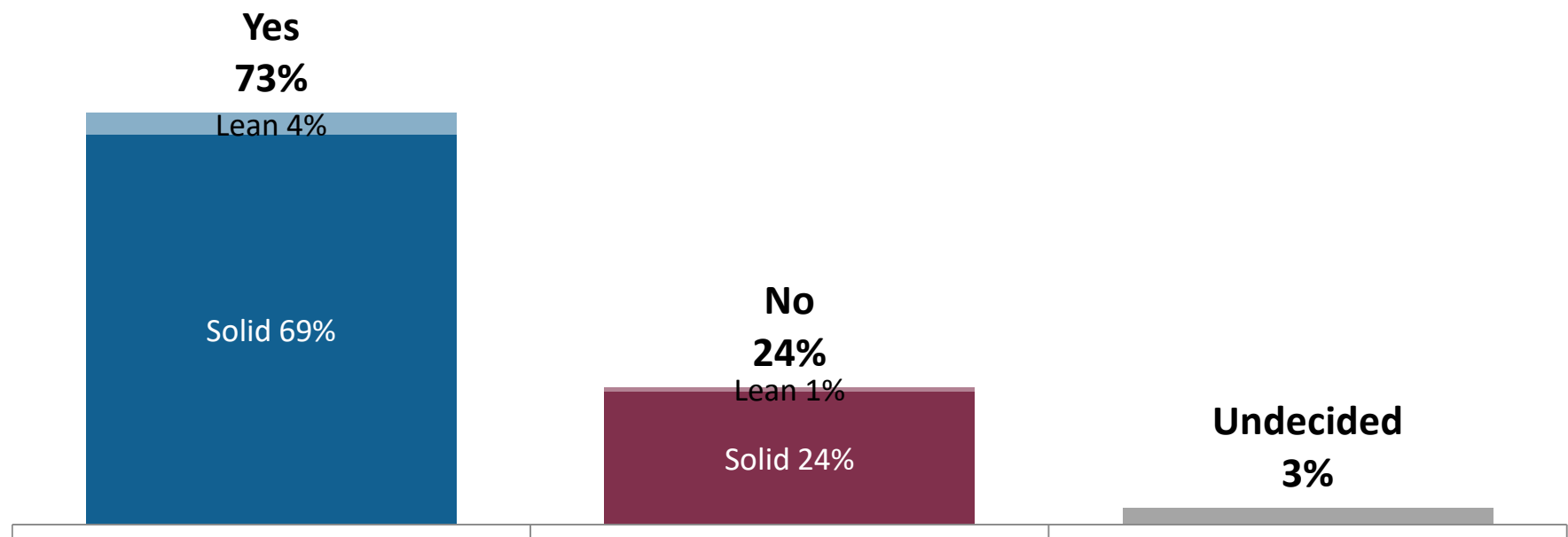


# Revenue Measure Feasibility

# Initial Vote on Sales Tax Measure

*Initial support is above two-thirds.*

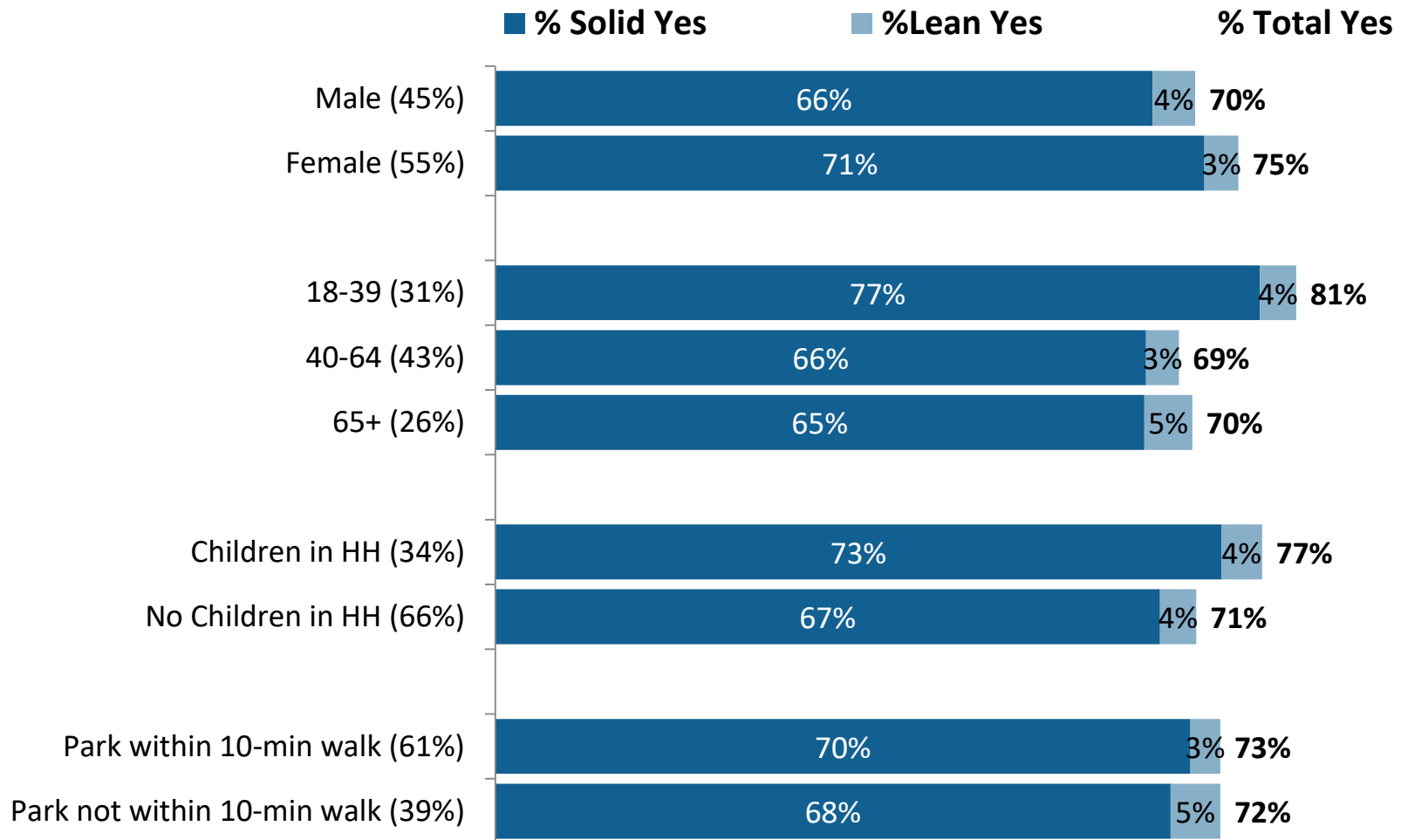
To provide clean, safe neighborhood parks for all Fresno residents; reduce crime and homelessness in parks; ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities; update and maintain playgrounds, play areas, and swimming pools; maintain and improve recreational programs for youth and seniors; provide additional parks and trails; and improve walking and biking access to parks, shall the City of Fresno levy a one-eighth cent sales tax, for 10 years, raising approximately \$13 million annually, exclusively for Fresno parks and recreation?



Q14. If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure?

# Sales Tax Measure Initial Support, by Subgroup

*Support is especially high among women, younger voters and voters with children.*

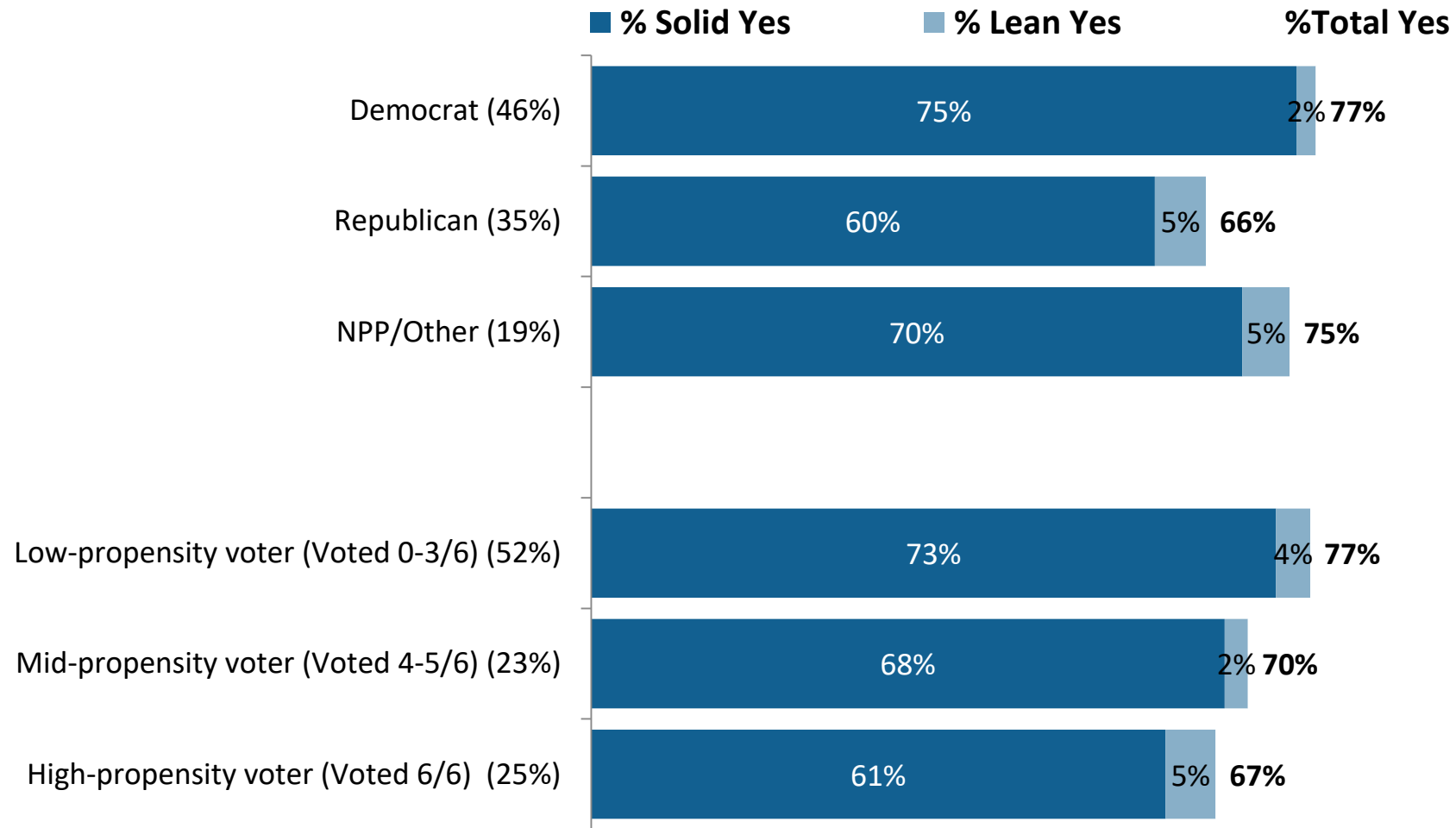


Q14. If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure?



# Sales Tax Measure Initial Support, by Subgroup

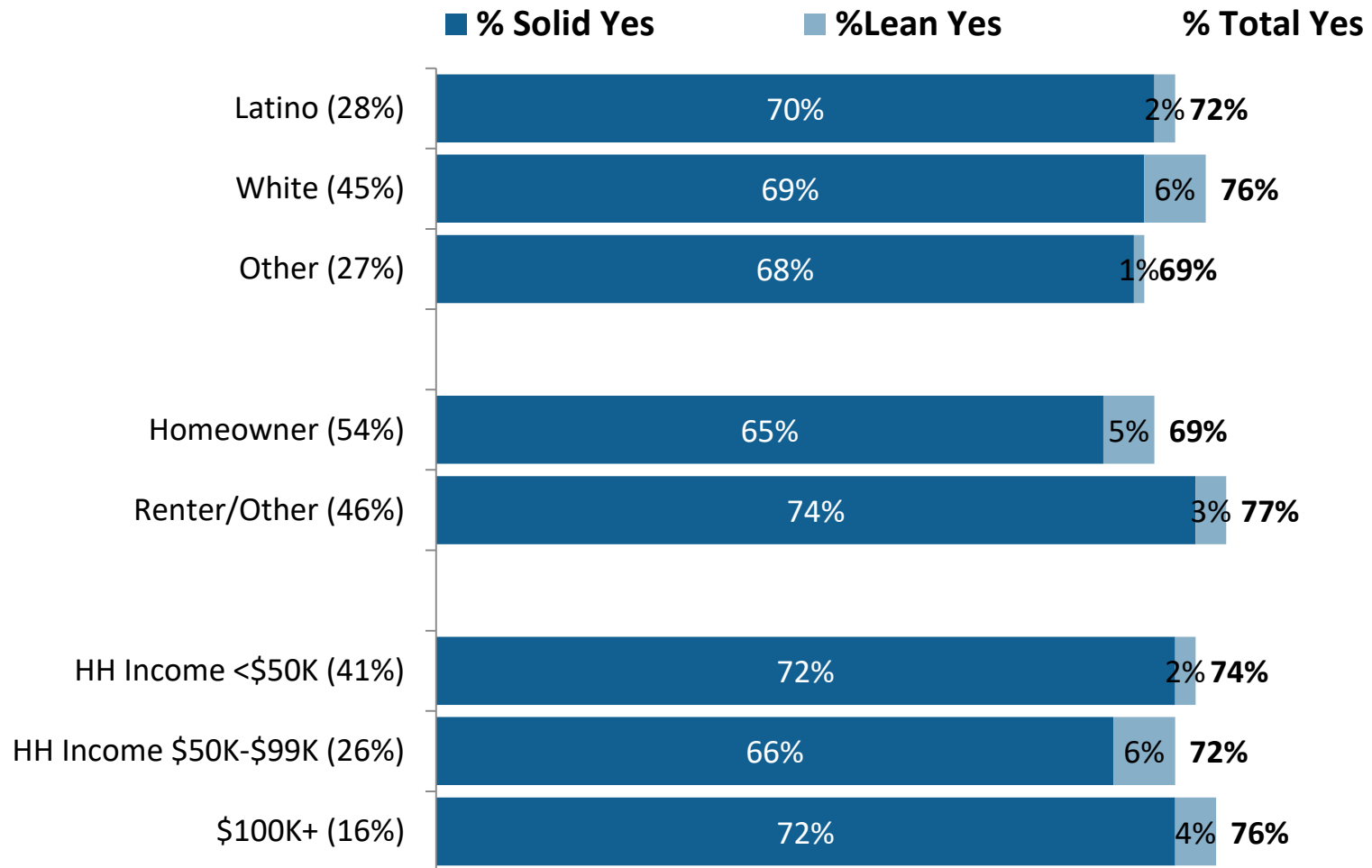
*Voters who are most likely to vote in low-turnout elections are least supportive.*



Q14. If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure?

# Sales Tax Measure Initial Support, by Subgroup

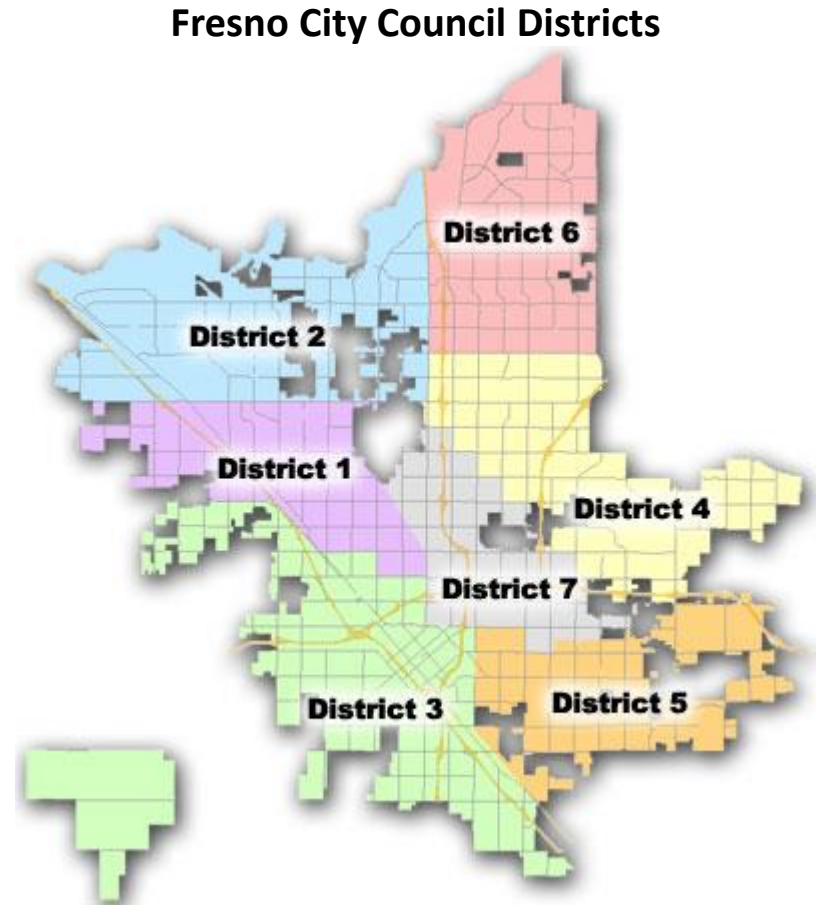
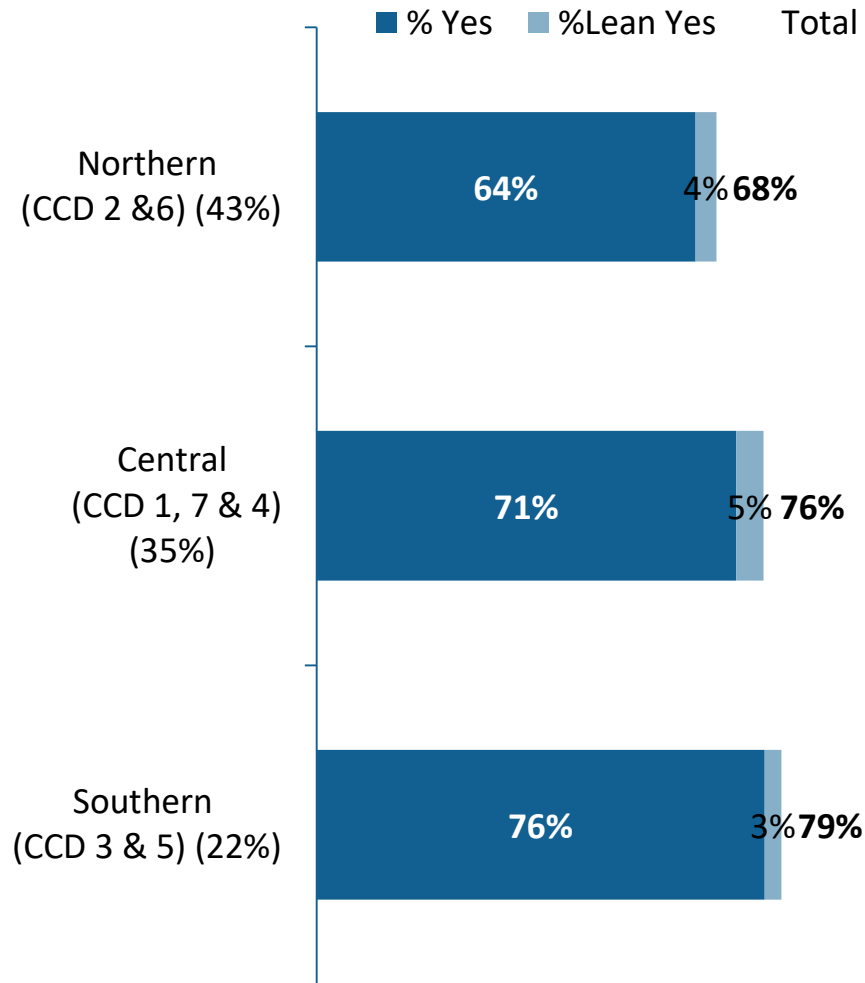
*Renters are more supportive of the measure than homeowners.*



Q14. If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure?

# Sales Tax Measure Initial Support, by Geography

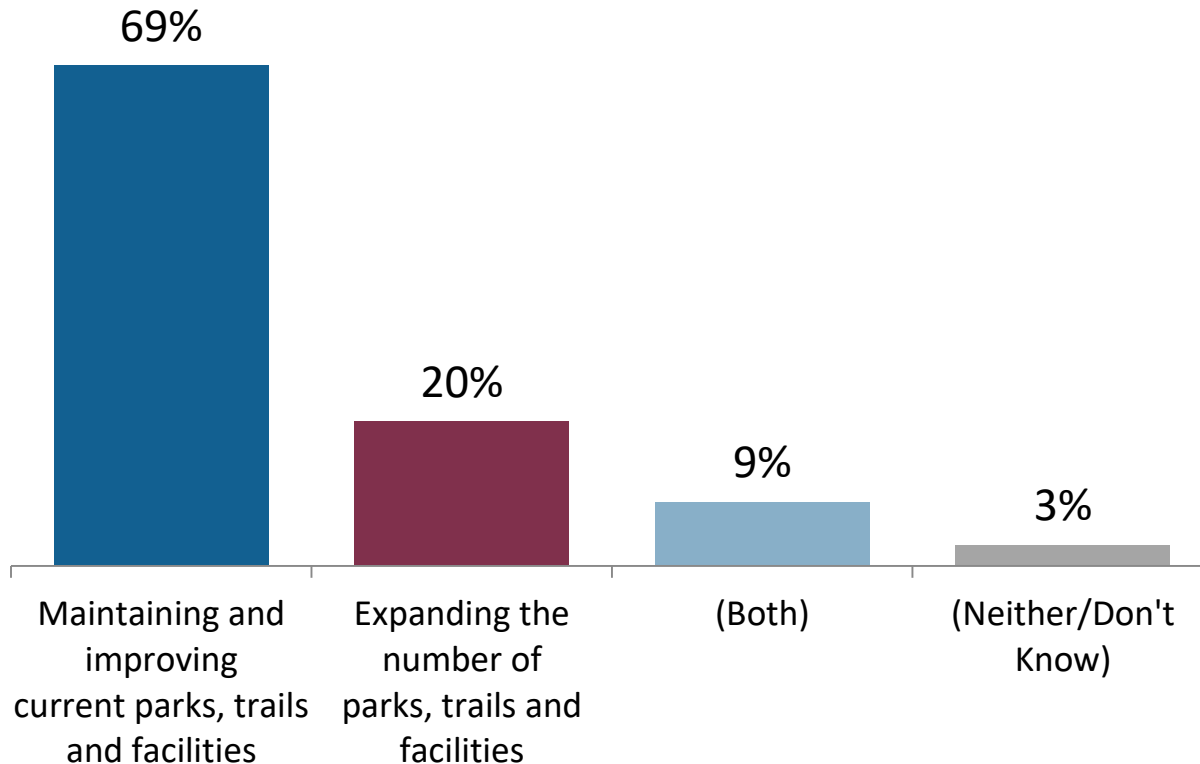
*Residents in the Southern part of Fresno are more supportive.*



Q14. If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure?

# Maintain, Improve, Expand

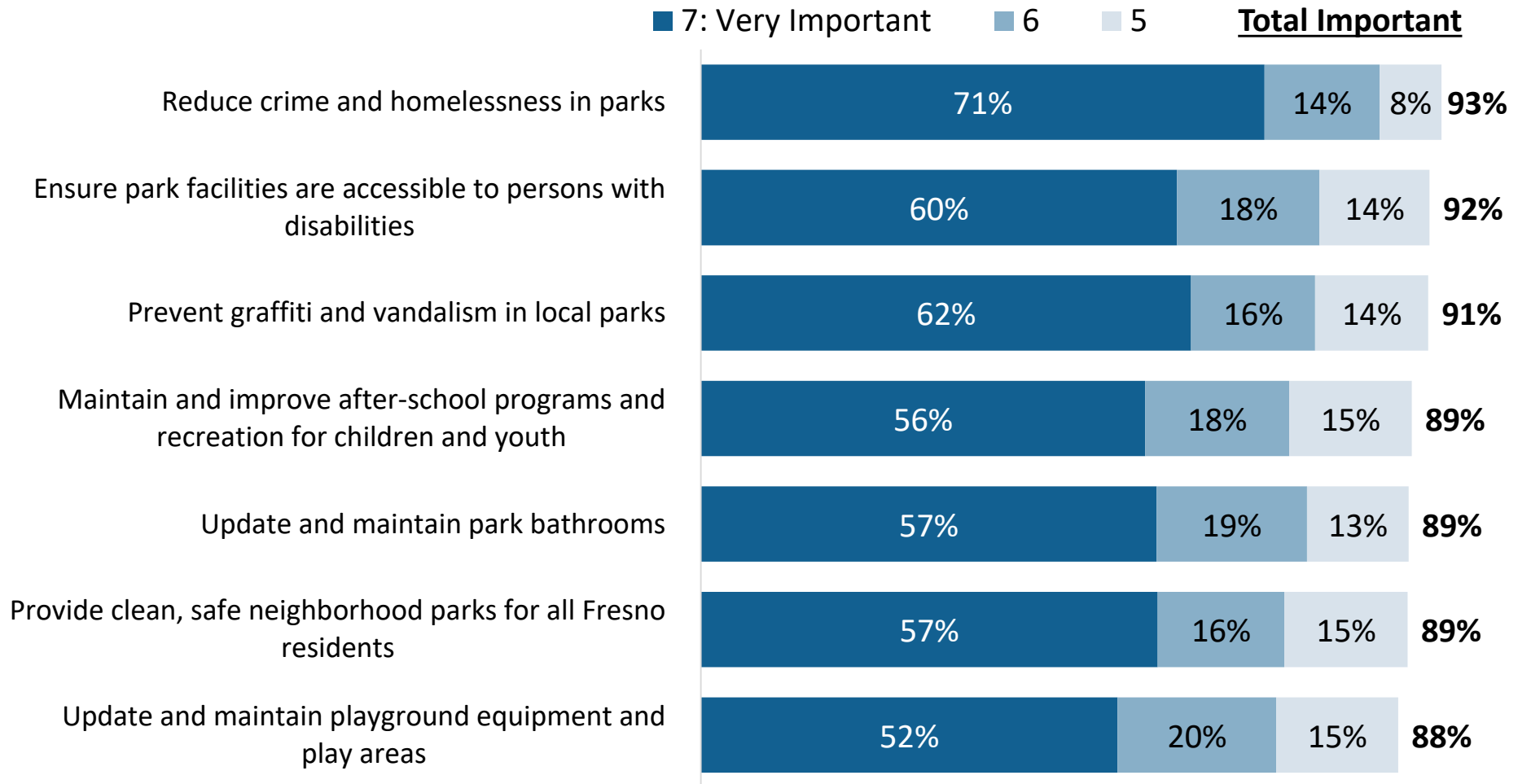
*While nearly a third of voters indicate that they would like to see new parks and trails, the majority prioritize maintenance and improvement of existing parks.*



Q19. Which of the following should be the highest priority for Fresno parks over the next ten years?

# Top Tier Measure Components

*In a long list of potential measure components, many of the top priorities focus on making parks safer and cleaner.*



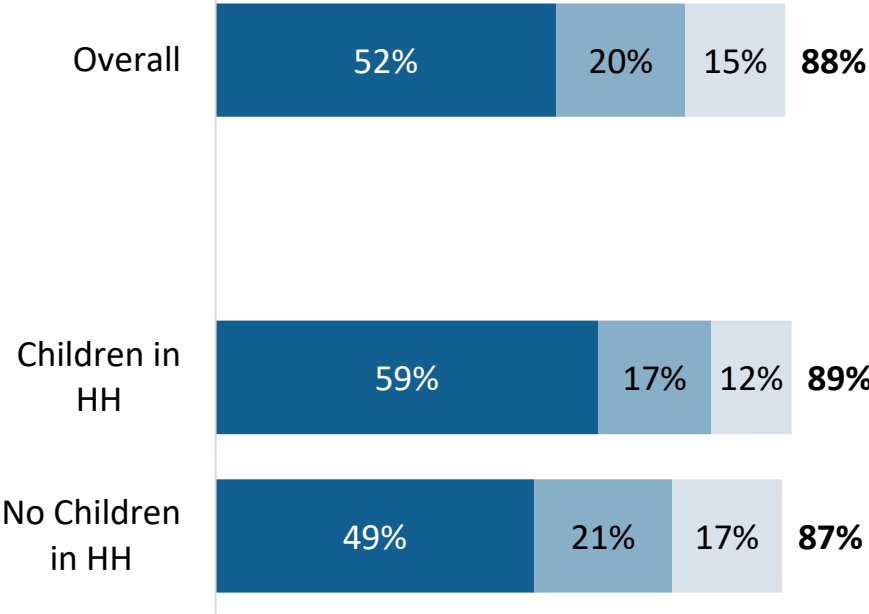
Q20-Q33: Now I'm going to read you a list of some of the projects and priorities for Fresno parks and recreation. On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is not important at all and 7 is very important, please tell me how important each of the items is to you.

# Measure Components: Priorities for Children

*Updating playgrounds and after-school programs are particularly important for voters with kids at home.*

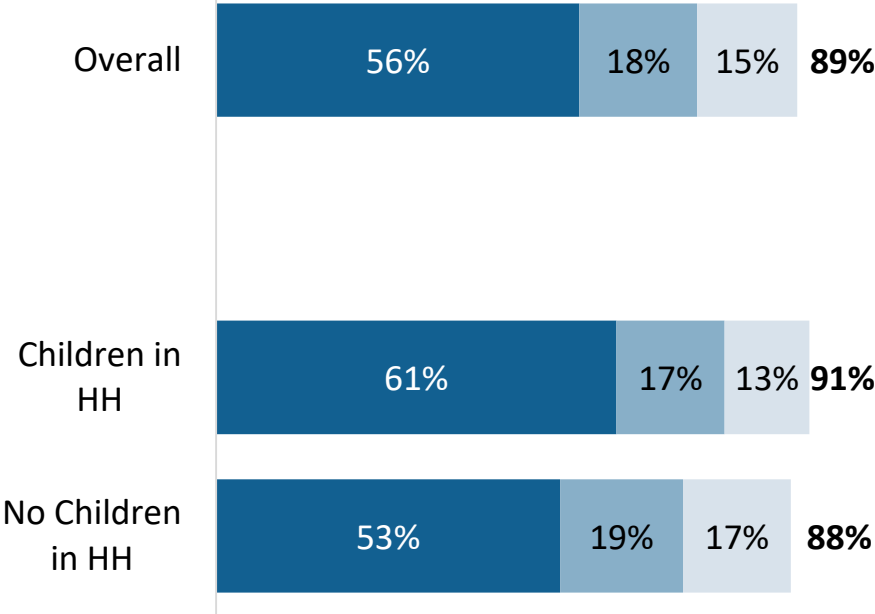
## Update and maintain playground equipment and play areas

7: Very Important 6 5 **Total**



## Maintain and improve after-school programs and recreation for children and youth

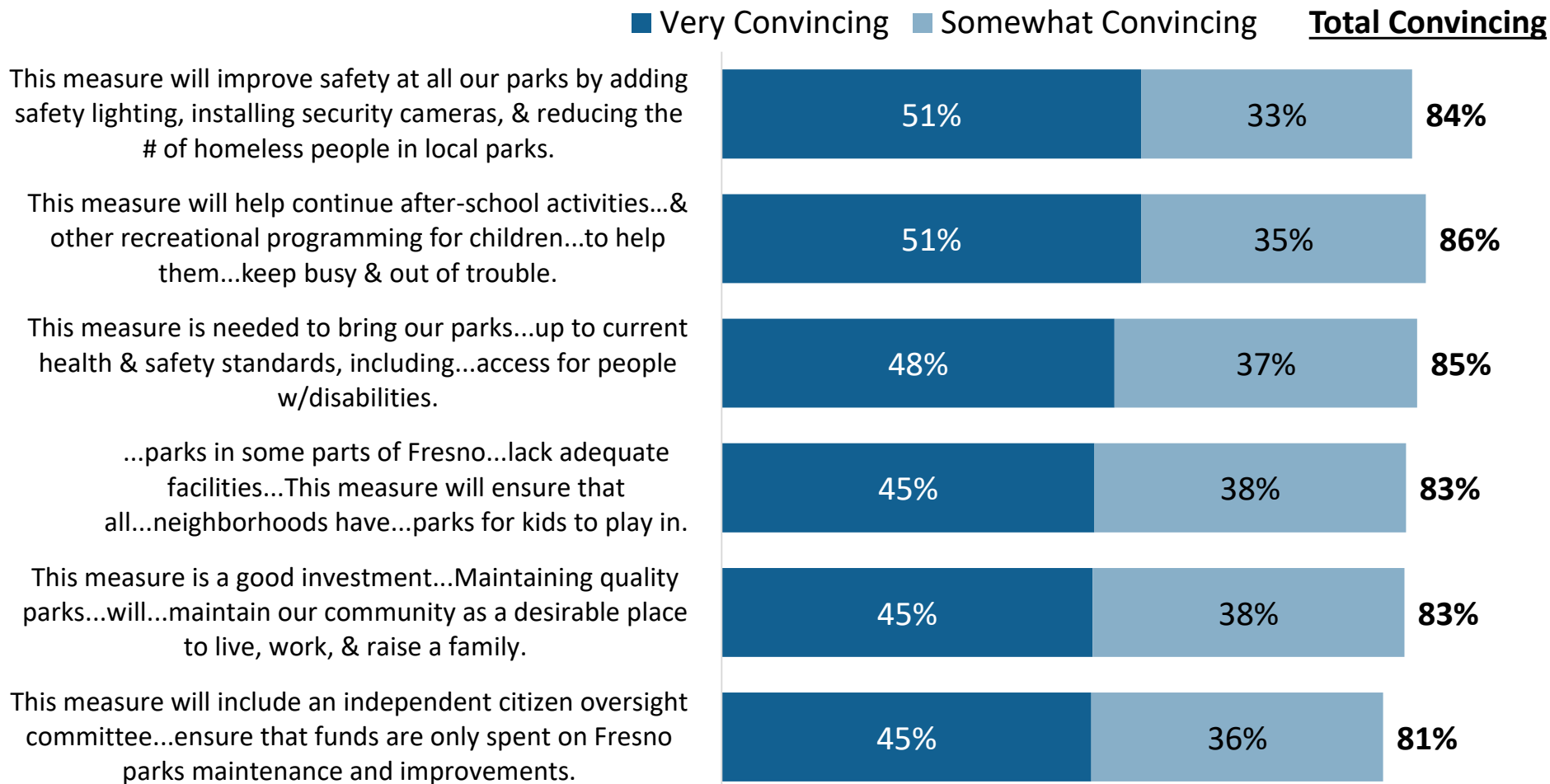
7: Very Important 6 5 **Total**



Q20-Q33: Now I'm going to read you a list of some of the projects and priorities for Fresno parks and recreation. On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is not important at all and 7 is very important, please tell me how important each of the items is to you.

# Additional Measure Information

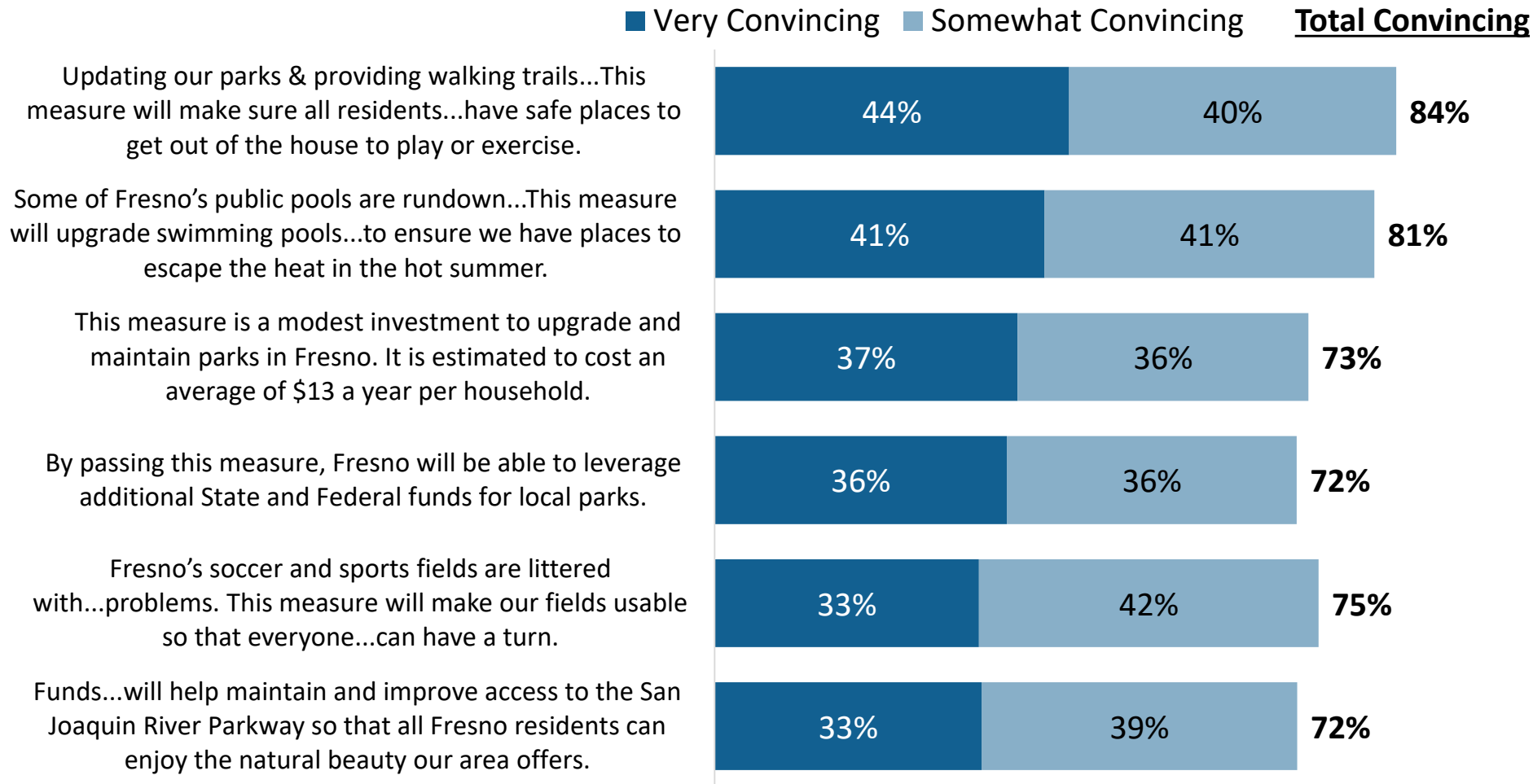
*Providing recreation to help keep kids busy and out of trouble, and improving safety at local parks are among the most convincing reasons to support a measure.*



Q34-Q45. Next I'd like to read you statements from people who support a 1/8 cent sales tax measure for Fresno Parks. After each one, please tell me how convincing that statement is as a reason to vote for a measure – very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing, or not at all convincing.

# Additional Measure Information, cont.

*All messages tested are convincing reasons to support a measure; a message that explains the annual cost is convincing to over two-thirds.*

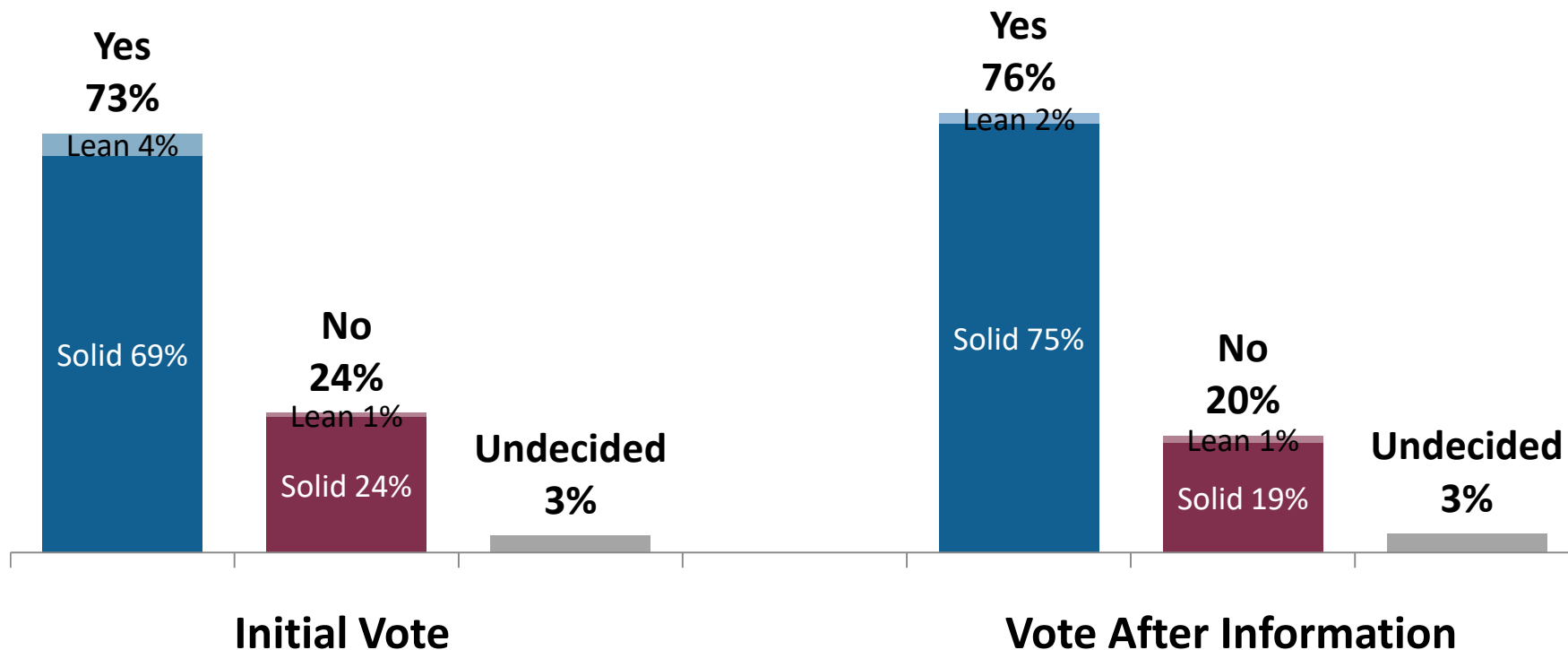


Q34-Q45. Next I'd like to read you statements from people who support a 1/8 cent sales tax measure for Fresno Parks. After each one, please tell me how convincing that statement is as a reason to vote for a measure – very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing, or not at all convincing.



# Vote After Information

*After more information is presented, total support increases to 76%.*

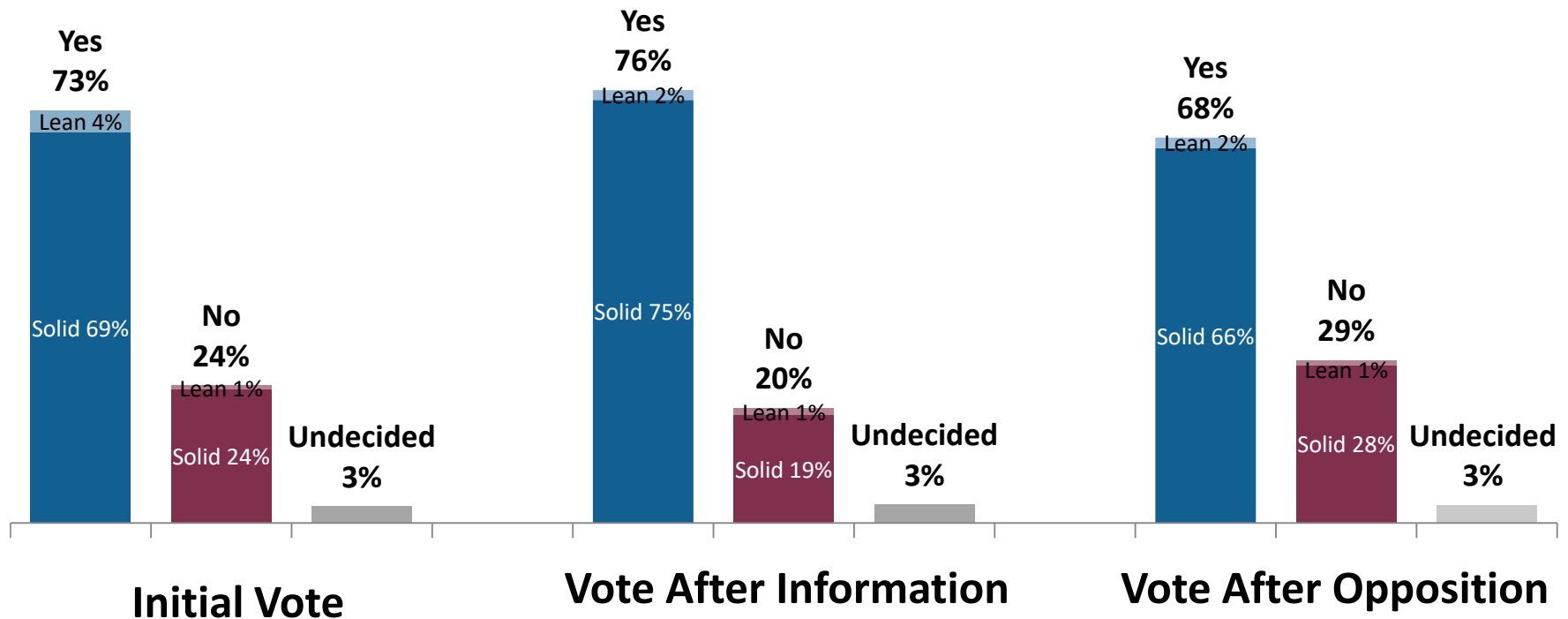


Q46: Given what you've heard, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject a measure that reads... If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure?

# After Opposition

*An opposition statement diminishes support for the measure.*

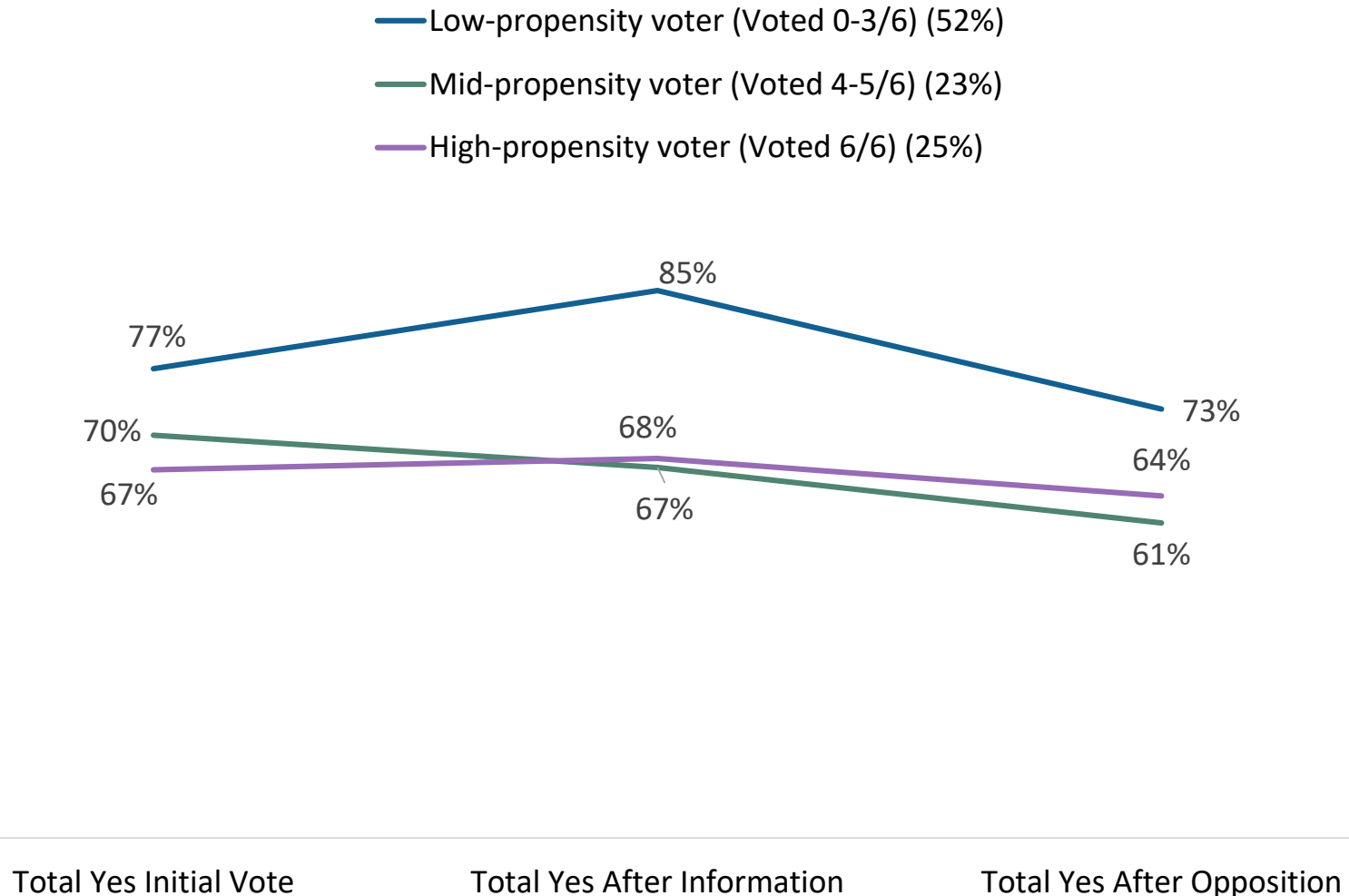
Opponents of this measure say that taxes are already too high, the city has been near bankruptcy and cannot be trusted with our money. Families are struggling and cannot afford to pay even more in taxes, and a sales tax increase will just damage our local economy.



Q47: Given what you've heard, if the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject the 1/8 cent sales tax measure for Fresno Parks?

# Vote Progression by Vote Propensity

*Support is consistently highest among low propensity voters, while support among higher-propensity voters dips below the two-thirds threshold after a short opposition statement.*



# Conclusions/Recommendations

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- ▶ **Most voters say that parks are a good use of taxpayer dollars**, and many prioritize maintenance and improvements of existing parks.
- ▶ **Reducing crime is a top priority** for most Fresno voters, and making parks cleaner and safer would be an extremely important component of a potential revenue measure.
- ▶ **A sales tax measure for clean, safe parks appears feasible**, but election timing and outreach will be important – infrequent, younger voters are most likely to support a measure.
- ▶ Although opposition messaging has a significant impact, a sales tax measure still appears feasible after voters hear an opposition message.
- ▶ **Building a strong coalition of support and a robust outreach and communications effort** centered around making parks cleaner and safer is recommended.

# Contacts

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